

# General Transportation Aids (GTA)

**Statutory Authority:** [§ 86.30](#)

**Admin. Rule:** N/A

**Objective:** To provide local governments with a partial reimbursement of funds to offset the cost of county and municipal road construction, maintenance, traffic, and police costs. A local unit of government's payment is based on either a share of eligible transportation related expenditures, or a per mile payment. The mix of fund sources supporting local roads reflects the mix of benefits they provide to both highway users and property owners.

**Eligibility:** The General Transportation Aids funds are distributed to all Wisconsin counties, cities, villages, and towns. Payments are divided among all local governments based on either a percentage of eligible highway-related expenditures or a per-mile payment, whichever results in a higher payment. It covers a portion of the cost of such things as constructing roads, filling potholes, plowing snow, grading shoulders, marking pavement, and repairing curbs and gutters.

**Description:** The General Transportation Aids program is the largest single line item in WisDOT's budget. It returns to local governments roughly 30% of all state-collected transportation revenues. Under this program, 1,922 local governments (all counties, cities, villages, and towns) receive quarterly payments based on local road mileage and aidable local costs. Aidable local costs generally include the local share of all road and street construction and maintenance costs within roadway rights of way. Expenditures on county forest roads are aided under another, separate program.

- Within a given annual funding level, the major determinants of the amount of aid a local government will receive are the road mileage under its jurisdiction (used to calculate rate-per-mile payments) and the amount of its own resources it has spent on that mileage over an average of six years (used in determining "share of costs" payments).
- The rate-per-mile is statutorily specified and is \$1,825 in CY 2004.
- The "share of costs" percentage floats from year to year based on the costs reported and whatever funding remains in the appropriation after rate-per-mile entitlements are subtracted.
- There are two appropriations, one for counties and one for municipalities.
- **Municipalities are limited to receiving state aid equivalent to no more than 85% of their three-year average aidable costs under either the rate-per-mile or "share of costs" formulas.**

- The “cushions” in the formula ensure:
  - a. Local governments can receive increases from their previous year's payments up to 15%;
  - b. For counties payment reductions are limited to 2% of the previous year's payment;
  - c. For municipalities payment reductions are limited to 5% of the previous year's payment.
- Each spring, local governments file revenue and expenditure reports with the Department of Revenue. DOT uses the highway-related portions of that data to determine a local government's aidable spending. Since the reports are based on calendar-year data, there is a lag in its effect on transportation aid payments, e.g.: costs incurred during 2002 were submitted in 2003 and first used in the calculation of 2004 aid amounts.

**CY 2004 Appropriation:** \$373,335,700